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In the Grip of Environment By HENRY WINTHROP

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Jim Blakely, the clown, came dashing out of the ring into the dressing tent and stopped short. Nellie Cosgrove was sitting on top of the leaping pad, her usually merry eyes streaming with tears. Beside her stood a man looking exceedingly awkward and uncomfortable.

Circus folk are always resentful of the intrusion of the outside world into their domain, and the fact that this stranger wore a frock coat and an exceedingly shiny silk hat was all that was needed to convince Jim that he was the cause of Nellie's tearful eyes. He strode up wrathfully, his painted face in ludicrous contrast to the intense tones of his voice.

"See here," he said fiercely, "this isn't any place for an outsider, least of all for a bloomin' dude what comes in and insults one of our girls. If you don't get out of here quick you'll be sorry for it, and I won't have to call any 'Hey, Rube!' to do it."

Spangles, the Great Dane, that did a pad riding act as well as leading a



"DON'T, JIM!" SHE SAID PLAINLY.

troupe of trained dogs, pricked up her ears knowingly and rose to her feet. "Hey, Rube!" the circus war cry from time immemorial, was no new sound to her, and she looked affectionately at the left leg of the stranger's carefully creased trousers, deciding that a spot about four inches below the knees would be the strategic point for a grip.

Nellie raised a hand. "Don't, Jim!" she said plaintively. "He hasn't said anything to me. It's just that they want to take me away."

"Take you away!" he cried incredulously. "Why, you've been with the old show ever since you were a little kiddie, ever since your ma died of yellow fever in Rio, and we picked you up the next season. That was way back in 1892, and you were a little shrimp of twelve. Take you away! I'd like to see the man who'd try it!"

"It's the money," she explained despairingly. "I'm an actress, and this gentleman is the lawyer. He wants me to go back to New York with him tonight."

For a single moment Blakely's frame grew rigid. The lawyer, a keen observer of men, followed clearly the mental strain the circus man was undergoing. He could see what the girl had never seen, that this man with the uncouth mask of zinc and carmine loved the little rider, and in the brief struggle he read the fight of an honest man with his own desires. In that short space Blakely made his fight. When he spoke his voice was cold and commonplace.

"We always said," he commented, "that your mother's people must be of the right sort. I'm glad of it. Work with the tents isn't for such as you." Then he turned, but more than the makeup came off on the towel as he hurriedly changed his face for the dog act.

As one in a daze he put his pets through their paces, and after the show was over and the concert audience was slowly filing into the show lot he still went about his work as though in a dream.

He had loved and watched over Nellie ever since that time in Rio Janeiro when, "way back in 1892," they had picked up the little stp of a girl, the sole survivor of a circus troupe which had played through South America the season before.

He had known Frank Cosgrove well, a fine, gentlemanly fellow, who had run off with an English girl when her parents had objected to her marrying the "riding master" of an English caravan.

They had come to America to escape memories, and she had taken up with circus life as willingly as though she had not been reared in luxury. It was Blakely who had persuaded Delmore to take the girl into the troupe, and it was he who had completed her education as a rider. Before a broken leg compelled him to take to clowning he had been a wonderful bareback somersaulter himself. He had hoped some day to make her his wife when the nest egg in a city savings bank had grown large enough to warrant the purchase of a country place and assure a competence when they should have retired. Until then he had spoken no word of love, but rather had encouraged her to look upon him as her foster father. Now he was to lose her and all that he had planned and worked and saved for. But it was best for her—that was enough for him. He took no part in the ring bank

chat after supper. He had no heart to sit there about the bank and hear the comment that would be made about the good fortune, and he went out back of the dressing tent, and, lighting the short stub of a pipe he carried, blew great clouds of smoke into the soft evening air, as he tried to think what the circus would be on the morrow, with no little Nell to make every one merry.

There in the soft light that came through the tent she found him. Out front all was life and movement. Here they were practically alone. She slipped down beside him on the overturned manger and slipped her hand into his. His horny palm closed over her tiny fingers, and he put away the pipe, but gave no other sign. It was she who opened the conversation.

"I feel like a dream girl tonight," she began coquishly. "Don't you remember how we used to plan that if we ever got money we would start a show of our own, and only have in the company people we really liked and make them do only one act apiece?"

He laughed shortly. "It's funny what rot we think. Now you've got the money, you've got to go and live up to it. It would never do for an actress to ride in the ring."

"I don't want to go a bit," she protested. "This is the life I know and love. I want to stay here and be myself, not another girl all dressed up, with servants and all that sort of thing."

He turned on her sharply. "See here, Nell," he commanded. "Don't talk like that. It's hard work doing two acts twice a day. It's not for you, my girl. Make up your mind to that."

She turned up the turf with the toe of a dainty shoe. "I don't want to make up my mind to it," she protested. "I don't care for the old money. I want to be here with you and all the rest. You hurt me!" she broke off suddenly, releasing her hand from his grasp and rubbing it.

"I didn't mean to hurt you, child," he said sadly. "I was thinking." He could not tell her how that one sentence had torn at his heartstrings, already sore. He rose. "Well, I've got to go in and get Spangles ready. I'll say goodby after the show." He turned on his heel, and presently she could hear him calling to the dog. Then other sounds of preparation began, and presently she, too, went inside.

The "round top" was already packed in the wagons and on its way to the cars when Nellie emerged from the women's side of the dressing tent, where the lawyer waited impatiently for his charge. She went up to the boss property man. "Put my trunk in the wagon, Sam," she said. "I'm going on with the show."

The lawyer blustered and stormed, but she was adamant, and finally he appealed to Blakely. "You can't go with us, Nell," said the clown, his face as white as though he had not removed his ring makeup. "There is no reason why you should stay on."

She made him a saucy courtesy. "There is every reason, good sir," she smiled. "In the first place, this is my life, the only one I know or want, and besides"—she went very close and whispered in his ear—"besides, I found out back of the tent there that—I—loved you."

And after that what could Blakely say?

The Difference. Uncle Jared and Uncle Benjamin made a sorry pair. True there was blood on Uncle Benjamin's forehead, and he looked white and faint. But Uncle Jared, who tried to support him, walked with a very pronounced limp, displayed only one coat tail where two should have been and was rumped and bedraggled generally in a way to suggest participation in a riot.

"What's happened to you two?" asked a townsman. "That pesky coat of Benjamin's run away and threw him just as I came along," Uncle Jared answered. "I'm giving him a lift along toward home."

"Look as though you needed one yourself," pronounced the inquisitor. "What's been happenin' to you?" "Who? Me? Why, nothin' to speak of—just been to town to see the big procession. Got more or less hustled round and tromped on, but"—He stooped painfully to adjust a shoe which had been ripped open so that half of the upper flapped as he walked.

"Don't see much difference betwixt ye, judgin' by the display o' wreckage," the neighbor persisted. "There's considerable difference, I take it," Uncle Jared answered, with conclusive dignity. "Benjamin's met with an accident, but I've been pleasin' in"—Youth's Companion.

Technically Stated. Music Teacher—Your daughter's voice is of fine quality and capable of reaching and sustaining some very lofty notes, but lacks control. Airship Inventor—In terms that are clear to one of my profession, you mean that it will fly high and far, but is not dirigible?—Baltimore American.

Well Posted. The Boss—I'm afraid you are not qualified for the position. You don't know anything about my business. The Applicant—Don't I, though? I keep company with your typewriter.—Chicago Journal.

Chronicle. "Jones is growin' at the world again." "Why, I thought he was doing well." "So he is, but he was 't expectin' his good fortune!"—Atlanta Constitution.

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Anyone Desiring a Situation can Insert an Advertisement in this Column of Three Lines Two Times Free of Charge.

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THE ORIGINAL JOHN A. MOLER has opened one of the famous barber colleges at 644 Clay st., San Francisco; special inducements this month; positions granted; tuition earned while learning. Write correct number, 644 Clay st., San Francisco.

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TWO UNFURNISHED ROOMS TO rent over Star theater. Inquire at theater.

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OLD PAPERS FOR SALE AT THIS Office; 25c per hundred.

FOR SALE—MISCELLANEOUS.

For sale—At Gaston's feed stable, No. 105 Fourteenth street; one Landie's harness machine; one Smith-Premier typewriter; one 20 hp motor and belt; 1000 good sacks.

FOR RENT—HOUSES.

For Rent—Six-room house, corner 47th and Cedar streets, Alderbrook, two blocks from car line. Inquire of Mrs. K. Johnson, over Fisher Bros' store.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

\$25 Reward. To the parties that circulated the report that there was a number of Senby Gas engines on the Columbia river that would not run and were laid aside for "scrap iron," I will pay the above reward for the name of each owner of said engines furnished me through the Astorian. ANDREW HAUGE.

Bank Notice.

The nineteenth annual meeting of the stockholders of the First National Bank of Astoria, for the election of directors and transaction of other business, will be held at the banking office, Tuesday, January 10th, 1905, at 3 p. m. S. S. GORDON, Cashier. December 11th, 1904.

"MISCELLANEOUS."

To the Public. Notice is hereby given that polling place for precinct number six in the city of Astoria, for the election to be held on the 14th day of December, 1904, has been moved from the old Adair schoolhouse to the mess house near McGregor's mill. OLOF ANDERSON, Auditor and Police Judge.

Hansen & McCanna, who occupy the shop formerly used by T. S. Simpson, adjoining the city water office, are prepared to do all kinds of sign and carriage painting. They will make a specialty of work of this class and guarantee satisfaction. If you are thinking of raising or moving a building it would be to your advantage to see Fredrickson Bros., general carpenters and house movers. Shop, corner Tenth and Duane streets.

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A Superb Production Guaranteed!

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